



Article Alert

MAY 2012

INFORMATION RESOURCE CENTER, PUBLIC AFFAIRS SECTION, U.S. EMBASSY JAKARTA

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Memorial Day Holiday Honors American War Dead

By Michael Jay Friedman

The Memorial Day holiday celebrated by Americans on the last Monday of May represents for many the unofficial beginning of summer. Many will travel over the long holiday weekend to seek out friends and family, beaches and amusement parks. But most will pause at some point to recall the holiday's true purpose: honoring those who died defending their nation.

Memorial Day entertainments throughout the United States range from large sporting events to quintessentially small-town celebrations. The Indianapolis ("Indy") 500 motor race, by some measures the world's largest single-day sporting event, attracts an estimated global audience of more than 320 million.

Meanwhile, in Waterloo, New York — festivities include a parade, arts and crafts show, a strawberry festival, music, tours of the town's Civil War museum and an antique car show. Civil War buffs in period uniforms and dresses hold a two-night encampment and stand by for live cannon-fire demonstrations. Those not too full from the pizza-eating contest can compete in a five-kilometer race.

The story of Waterloo, and that of the holiday itself, is woven deeply into the nation's history.

During the American Civil War of 1861–1865, which claimed the lives of more than 550,000 people, many citizens began to place flowers on the graves of the war dead. A number of northern municipalities continued these "Decoration Days" after the war ended,

but the decisive event occurred in 1866 in Waterloo, 450 kilometers from New York City.

THE FIRST ANNUAL OBSERVANCE

In 1865, Waterloo resident Henry C. Welles, the town's druggist, hit on the idea of formally setting aside a day to honor those killed in the war. He was supported by one of his customers, John B. Murray, who had risen to the rank of brigadier general in the Union (northern) Army, and Murray's friend, Major General John A. Logan, another retired Union commander. In 1866 Waterloo held the first formal, village-wide, annual observance of a day dedicated to honoring the war dead, and it has continued to do so for 146 years. On Memorial Day weekend, visitors inflate the town's population to several times its normal size.

Among the ceremonies held that day was one at Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia, across the Potomac River from Washington. President Ulysses S. Grant presided. After the speeches and tributes, thousands of war orphans, veterans and others decorated the graves of the Civil War dead. There were more than 20,000 such graves at Arlington Cemetery alone.

By the turn of the century, nearly every state had declared Decoration Day an official holiday. After World War I, Decoration Day was expanded to honor those killed in all of the nation's wars, and after World War II it became known as Memorial Day. (Veterans Day, which honors all veterans, living and dead, is celebrated each year on November 11.)

Congress established Memorial Day as a federal holiday in 1971 and fixed its observance on the last Monday in May.

HONORING OUR WAR DEAD

The original Waterloo commemoration centered on the decoration of soldiers' graves, the lowering of flags to half-staff, and veterans' parades. These ceremonies continue in cities and towns across the nation on Memorial Day.

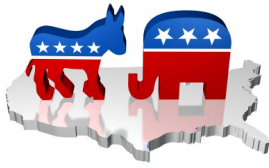
There are more than 2.9 million gravesites at 130 national cemeteries around the country. For Memorial Day, volunteers will decorate most of these veterans' graves with small American flags. The U.S. president or vice president typically presides at Arlington National Cemetery and places a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknowns. Solemn observances are held at Civil War battle sites, including Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, and Sharpsburg (Antietam), Maryland.

At 3 p.m., a National Moment of Remembrance unites Americans in prayer and thought as they contemplate the sacrifices made in their behalf.

Thus, even as Americans enjoy their long weekend and the prospect of summer, they also can be found in more somber moods. Wreaths will be laid, thanks given and heads bowed in recognition of those who made the ultimate sacrifice. Source: <http://goo.gl/hlOjI>

Related link:
<http://www.arlingtoncemetery.mil/>

U.S. PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION HIGHLIGHTS



SISTEM DUA PARTAI DALAM PEMILU A.S.

Sejak tahun 1860-an partai Republik dan Demokrat

merupakan dua partai besar pewaris sistem multipartai dari abad ke-18 dan ke-19. Kedua partai ini tercatat mendominasi proses politik di Amerika Serikat.

Sistem Pemilu di Amerika tidak seperti sistem proporsional yang populer di banyak negara demokrasi, pengaturan standar untuk pemilihan legislator tingkat nasional dan negara bagian di Amerika Serikat adalah sistem distrik "anggota tunggal" dimana calon yang menerima suara terbesar (dengan kata lain suara terbanyak di distrik tempat pemilihan manapun) akan memenangi pemilihan. Meskipun sejumlah kecil negara bagian mensyaratkan mayoritas suara untuk pemilihan, sebagian besar pemegang jabatan dapat terpilih melalui suara terbanyak di tingkat distrik saja. Pada akhirnya, pengaturan dengan sistem anggota tunggal seperti ini hanya memperbolehkan satu partai yang memenangi distrik pemilihan manapun. Sistem anggota tunggal memberikan keuntungan politis bagi partai-partai nasional yang berbasis luas dengan kemampuan manajemen dan sumber daya keuangan yang memadai yang memungkinkan calon-calonnya memenangkan pemilihan di distrik legislatif di seluruh negeri. Dengan struktur "pemenang mengambil semuanya", maka calon-calon dari partai kecil dan partai ketiga dengan sumber keuangan dan dukungan rakyat yang minimal tidak diuntungkan. Mereka sulit

untuk memenangkan kursi apa pun, baik di distrik apalagi tingkat nasional.

Mengapa hanya dua dan bukan tiga partai nasional dengan pendanaan terbaik? Alasannya, orang Amerika secara historis tidak menyukai kondisi politik yang ekstrim dan dua partai yang sudah ada dianggap mampu mengakomodir ide-ide baru.

THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE

Pemilihan Presiden dalam sistem dua partai mengenal istilah *Electoral College*, suatu sistem di mana setiap negara bagian menentukan *elector* (sekelompok orang yang terpilih) untuk memilih presiden dan wakilnya, setelah pemilihan *popular vote* dilakukan. Jadi kandidat presiden yang mendapat *popular vote* pada pemilu bulan November tidak otomatis memenangkan pemilu, dengan kata lain, secara teknis orang Amerika tidak memilih langsung presiden dan wakil presidennya. Jumlah *Electoral College* mempunyai proporsi yang sama dengan banyaknya jumlah delegasi Kongres satu negara bagian, yaitu jumlah wakil rakyat dan senator dari negara bagian yang bersangkutan. Untuk dapat terpilih menjadi presiden, seorang calon presiden membutuhkan suara mayoritas mutlak dari 538 anggota *Electoral College*. Jumlah ini termasuk tiga perwakilan dari ibukota Washington D.C, yang bukan merupakan negara bagian dan tidak memiliki hak suara dalam Kongres.

Persyaratan mayoritas mutlak ini membuat calon dari partai di luar kedua partai mayoritas benar-benar sulit untuk memenangkan kursi presiden karena suara pemilih di setiap negara bagian dialokasikan di bawah pengaturan

"pemenang mengambil semua," dengan dua pengecualian yaitu siapa pun calon yang menerima suara terbanyak di sebuah negara bagian bahkan jika jumlahnya kecil memenangkan semua suara pemilih di negara bagian itu.

Electoral College dirancang oleh para bapak bangsa pendiri negara Amerika Serikat untuk membagi kekuasaan antara pemerintah nasional dan pemerintahan negara bagian. Di bawah sistem *Electoral College*, suara terbanyak secara nasional untuk presiden akhirnya tidak penting. Akibatnya, mungkin saja suara pemilih yang didapat berdasarkan pemilihan-pemilihan di negara bagian (*Electoral College*) memberikan hasil yang berbeda dengan suara terbanyak di seluruh negeri (*popular vote*). Sebagian orang menganggap *Electoral College* adalah peninggalan usang, sedangkan sebagian lain lebih menyukainya karena mensyaratkan para calon presiden untuk bertarung di banyak negara bagian, dan bukan hanya di negara bagian yang mempunyai jumlah penduduk terpadat saja.

PENGHALANG BAGI PARTAI LAIN

Proses pencalonan Amerika yang khas merupakan penghalang struktural tambahan bagi partai lain. Di antara negara-negara demokrasi di dunia, Amerika Serikat unik dalam keberangtunggannya pada pemilihan-pemilihan pendahuluan untuk mengusung calon partai menuju kursi presiden, Kongres dan jabatan negara bagian. Di banyak negara, pencalonan partai dikendalikan oleh pengurus partai dan para pemimpinannya, tetapi di Amerika Serikat para pemilih yang akhirnya menentukan siapa yang akan menjadi calon dari partai Republik atau Demokrat.

Sumber: The Role of Political Parties from IIP Digital. Link: <http://goo.gl/XCf2D>

GLOBAL ISSUES

1. Adler, Jerry and Lawler, Andrew. **HOW THE CHICKEN CONQUERED THE WORLD** (Smithsonian Magazine, June 2012)

Chicken is the ubiquitous food of our era, crossing multiple cultural boundaries with ease. With its mild taste and uniform texture, chicken presents an intriguingly blank canvas for the flavor palette of almost any cuisine. A generation of Britons is coming of age in the belief that chicken tikka masala is the national dish, and the same thing is happening in China with Kentucky Fried Chicken. Long after the time when most families had a few hens running around the yard that could be grabbed and turned into dinner, chicken remains

a nostalgic, evocative dish for most Americans. When author Jack Canfield was looking for a metaphor for psychological comfort, he didn't call it "Clam Chowder for the Soul." Read more at <http://goo.gl/yBgwp>

2. Victor, David G.; Kennel, Charles F.; Ramathan, Veerabhadran. **WHAT IT IS AND HOW TO DEAL WITH IT** (Foreign Affairs, May/June 2012)

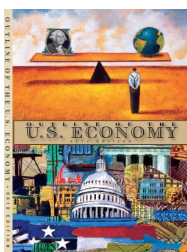
For more than two decades, diplomats have struggled to slow global warming. They have negotiated two major treaties to achieve that goal, the 1992 UN Framework Convention on

Climate Change and the 1997 Kyoto Protocol. And last year, at the UN Climate Change Conference in Durban, South Africa, they agreed to start talking about yet another treaty. A small group of countries, including Japan and the members of the European Union, now regulate their emissions in accord with the existing agreements. But most states, including the largest emitters of greenhouse gases, China and the United States, have failed to make much progress. As a result, total emissions of carbon dioxide, the leading long-term cause of global warming, have risen by more than 50 percent since the 1980s and are poised to rise by more than 30 percent in the next two to three decades.

ECONOMIC & INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

3. Drezner, Daniel W. **THE POWER OF ECONOMICS AND PUBLIC OPINION** (Policy Review, March 30, 2012).

The Atlantic alliance has demonstrated remarkable resilience over the past two decades. Most alliances do not outlast the dissolution of the threat that brought them into being. NATO, however, not only survived the collapse of the Soviet Union but went on to welcome a host of new members from Central Europe and to undertake military missions in Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Libya. As the Cold War came to a close, few observers could have predicted that NATO, twenty years later, would be in the midst of a major mission in Afghanistan while simultaneously carrying out a successful air campaign to topple the Libyan government. Currently available at <http://goo.gl/FLWZC>



6. **OUTLINE OF THE U.S. ECONOMY** (IIP Digital, April 30, 2012)

This is an update edition of Outline of the U.S. Economy. The IIP desk tried to approach the content with a sense of historical consciousness. In addition to the 1908 events depicted above, the United States has endured a Great

Depression (began 1929), a Long Depression (began 1873), a Panic of 1837 — “an American financial crisis, built on a speculative real estate market,” says Wikipedia — and assorted other recessions, panics, bubbles and contractions, and emerged from each with its economic vigor restored and its republican institutions vibrant. Hope that you will find this entry in our Outline series frank, informative, and above all useful. IIP desk offer it in the spirit of optimism embedded deeply in American life. Available online at <http://goo.gl/KXFFA>

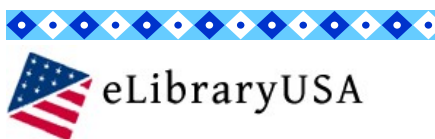
5. Shaheen, Jeanne. **THE ALLIANCE GATHERERS: WHAT NATO SHOULD AND SHOULDN'T DO IN CHICAGO** (Foreign Affairs, May 17, 2012)

Chicago was host the 25th Summit of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. The stakes are high: the capitals of nearly all NATO member nations are wrestling with unprecedented economic challenges — fiscal crises that have forced unwelcome austerity measures, declining defense budgets, and weak economic growth — as well as a rapidly evolving security situation, including rogue nations with nuclear ambitions, unrest in the Middle East, instability in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and global terrorism. Read more at <http://goo.gl/MpYGk>

Related article: President Obama on Results of NATO Summit, available at <http://goo.gl/GTgMR>

6. Scowcroft, Brent. **A WORLD TRANSFORMATION** (The National Interest, May/June 2012)

This special issue of *The National Interest* is particularly timely because we are living in a world that we know and that has shaped our thinking, but that world is in a process of transformation. We are struggling with institutions and practices of an Old World when that Old World is fading. This issue explores this global transformation, and writer commend to you the articles contained here under the rubric of the “Crisis of the Old Order.” Read more at <http://goo.gl/NgFKI>



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U.S. EDUCATION, SOCIETY & VALUES

7. Feldman, Sari and Wolven, Robert. **DIGITAL WORKING GROUP PUSHES FOR EXPANDED EBOOK ACCESS** (American Libraries, May 24, 2012)

As libraries struggle to meet these challenges of providing digital content in an environment characterized by significant uncertainty and changing on a daily basis, there is a need for an Association-wide group of experts, broadly representative of the many constituencies within the library community, that can proactively address these digital content opportunities and issues at the highest level and from both a policy and practical perspective. If out of frustration comes new ideas, creativity, and entrepreneurship, then ALA's Digital Content and Libraries Working Group (DCWG) is due its lightning-bolt moment. Following the 2012 ALA Midwinter Meeting in January, there were optimistic signs for future dialogue with publishers over the crucial issue of library access to ebooks, and the newly formed DCWG was ready and willing to deliver meaningful direction to the Association and its members. Read more at <http://goo.gl/QLTWm>

8. Hopkins, Katy. **IS AMERICA PHILOSOPHICAL?** (Chronicle of Higher Education Online, May 20, 2012)

Coming to the United States for college or graduate school can introduce cultural differences that even the most prepared students might not expect. From classroom etiquette to campus life, studying at a U.S. school can be quite a different experience from learning in another country. At a meeting of Fulbright scholars last month, *U.S. News* caught up with four international students in their first years of graduate study at universities across the United States. Available online at <http://goo.gl/FtAEh>

9. Scott, Dylan. **'GREEN' MUNICIPALITIES CUT TIES WITH UTILITIES** (Governing, May 2012)

When it comes to environmentally friendly cities, there's no place much greener or more granola than Boulder, Colo. The city of 97,000 on the edge of the Rocky Mountains has long been a leader in things like recycling programs and open-space preservation. It's home to the University

of Colorado, a nationally renowned leader in sustainability research, and in 2002, the Boulder City Council officially adopted the Kyoto Protocol. By the city's own count, Boulder has shown up on nearly a dozen “greenest city” lists in the past decade. Last year, officials committed to building 40 electric vehicle charging stations around town. Boulder even uses grazing goats as weed control on some municipal properties. Full text is available at <http://goo.gl/ZockL>

10. Wenner, Jann S. **READY FOR THE FIGHT** (Rolling Stone 1156, May 10, 2012).

First of all, I think it's important to distinguish between Republican politicians and people around the country who consider themselves Republicans. Here's a guy who not only believed in climate change, but co-sponsored a cap-and-trade bill that got 43 votes in the Senate just a few years ago, somebody who thought banning torture was the right thing to do, somebody who co-sponsored immigration reform with Ted Kennedy.

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- ☐ 4. OUTLINE OF THE U.S. ECONOMY
- ☐ 5. THE ALLIANCE GATHERS: WHAT NATO SHOULD AND SHOULDN'T DO IN CHICAGO
- ☐ 6. A WORLD TRANSFORMATION
- ☐ 7. DIGITAL WORKING GROUP PUSHES FOR EXPANDED EBOOK ACCESS
- ☐ 8. IS AMERICA PHILOSOPHICAL? AREAS
- ☐ 9. 'GREEN' MUNICIPALITIES CUT TIES WITH UTILITIES
- ☐ 10. READY FOR THE FIGHT

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